REPORT OF A VISIT

OF

THE REV. JOHN BEECHAM, D.D.,

TO

BRITISH AMERICA,

UNDERTAKEN AT THE REQUEST OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WESLEYAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

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A VISIT TO BRITISH AMERICA.

HOWEVER interesting to the general reader may be the publication of the journal of a traveller, in which he has recorded the incidents and events of his tour, as they occurred from day to day, with his impressions respecting what he saw and heard,—we must confine ourselves at present to a condensed statement of the objects and results of the visit in question. Some general information on these points we conceive that our friends and supporters have a right to look for, in an early Number of the Society's monthly publication. One principal object of the senior Secretary's deputation to British America was to make arrangements for the application, to our Missions in the Eastern Provinces, of the principle embodied in the Resolutions of the Missionary Committee, in December, 1851. At that time the Committee adopted the conclusion, for which circumstances had long been preparing their minds, that the platform of the Society's operations had become so greatly extended as to render it impossible for a board of management in this country to pay that attention to the several Missions, scattered through all the great divisions of the globe, which a due regard for their respective interests imperatively required; and that, as a consequence, measures ought to be taken, without further delay, for making the older Missions of the Society dependent, in a great measure, upon their own resources. The precedent which had been furnished at an early day by the measures that constituted the Methodist Societies in Ireland a distinct Connexion, under its own Conference,—which precedent was kept in view when, at a later period, an arrangement was made for an union of the Canadian with the English Conference,—indicated a legitimate, and, as it appeared, only effectual course to be pursued; and it was therefore determined to proceed upon the plan of forming those Missions into distinct but affiliated Connexions, each having an annual assembly, or local Conference, of its own; and that, on these bodies, thus constituted, should be devolved the twofold task of raising, as far as practicable, the means of self-support, and of managing their own local affairs; under certain general regulations having for their object the conservation of the great principles of our common system. The first experiment was made with France

and Switzerland. The way having been prepared by previous correspondence, Dr. Beecham, in the spring of 1852, at the request of the Missionary Committee, visited France; and, in consultation with the Missionaries, during several successive days, concluded the necessary arrangements for placing the Missionary work in that country upon a new foundation. These arrangements, having met the approval of the Missionary Committee, were sanctioned by the Conference at its subsequent meeting at Sheffield; and the Society's Missions in France and Switzerland became a distinct but affiliated Connexion, or church, with its own local Conference, under the presidency of the Rev. Dr. Cook. Australasia and Polynesia followed next in order. The plan on which the new French Connexion had been based was modified in some of its details, for the purpose of adapting it more fully to the circumstances of the work in those parts of the world; and the Rev. Robert Young was deputed to go to Australasia, and prepare the way for its introduction. On his return, encouraged by his report of the spirit in which the Missionaries and principal friends entered into the proposed plan, the Conference of 1854, which met at Birmingham, formed the Australasian and Polynesian Missions into a distinct affiliated Connexion, and appointed the Rev. William B. Boyce the President of its first local Conference.

British America, one of the oldest portions of the Methodist Mission field, was included in the new arrangements contemplated by the Committee. In 1847, the causes of misunderstanding which had disturbed the union between the Canadian and English Conferences having been removed, the Society's Indian and other Missions in Upper or Western Canada were connected again with the Canadian Conference, and a satisfactory re-union took place between that and the English Conference; leaving, under the immediate management of the Missionary Committee, the Missions in Lower Canada, the Eastern Provinces, and Newfoundland. The Bradford Conference of 1853 authorized the Committee to send a Deputation to British America, to make arrangements for bringing these remaining Missions under the new system; but so much time and attention was required for the revision and completion of the plan relating to Australasia, and the preparation of the requisite documents for carrying that plan into effect, that the proposed Deputation across the Atlantic was necessarily delayed. The union of the Lower or Eastern Canada and Hudson's-Bay Mission-Districts with the Canadian Conference, which had been arranged by correspondence during the year, was, however, effected at the following Conference of 1854, when the Australasian Connexion was formed; and the permission which had been granted to the Missionary Committee to send a Deputation to British America was, at the same time, renewed.

At the earnest request of the Committee, Dr. Beecham agreed to

undertake this visitation, primarily and especially with the view of making the requisite preparations for the formation of the Society's Missions in Nova-Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New-Brunswick, and Newfoundland, into a distinct ecclesiastical organization. As the successful working of the proposed measure must necessarily depend, to a great extent, upon the intelligent and hearty co-operation of the Missionaries themselves, Dr. Beecham determined to make an effort to see them at their annual District-Meetings, and explain to them collectively the views of the Missionary Committee and the Conference. This object he was enabled satisfactorily to accomplish. Setting off immediately after the Anniversary Meeting of the Society at Exeter-Hall in May last, (1855,) he reached Halifax in time to attend the Annual Meeting of the Nova-Scotia, West, District. From thence, accompanied by Dr. Richey, he proceeded to Amherst, and met the brethren of the Nova-Scotia, East, and Prince Edward Island District; and subsequently attended the New-Brunswick District-Meeting, in the city of St. John. At each of these places he also met as large a number of the office-bearers and principal friends of the several Districts as could be conveniently assembled. This visitation of the Districts was attended with encouraging success. He had commenced it under a deep impression of the arduous nature of the undertaking, and he found that he had not overrated the difficulties he would have to encounter. The inevitable consequences resulting from Missions being kept for a long course of time in a state of dependence upon the Parent Society were, in this case, sufficiently manifest. As Mission-Districts they were not bound together by the ties which unite the Home-Districts to each other; but each District looked simply to the Missionary Committee in London for pecuniary support, and directions as to the management of its local affairs. Thus isolated, to a considerable extent, from each other, the Missionaries and their people felt themselves shut up within the boundaries of their respective Districts. The Connexional principle was restricted in its operation. Each District confined itself very much to its own affairs; while a feeling of something like child-like dependence upon the parental arm of the Committee at home kept acquiring strength with the lapse of time. In addition to the difficulties arising out of this state of things, he had others to contend with in reference to Newfoundland. A strong objection, which, for a time, appeared to be almost invincible, existed generally in the Provinces against the incorporation of the Newfoundland Mission in the proposed scheme; and this part of the plan was as strongly opposed by the Missionaries and friends in Newfoundland, who wished to remain a Mission-District under the direct management of the Committee at home. All these objections, however, were overcome, so far as the Provinces were concerned; and he encouraged the hope,—a hope which was

subsequently realized,—that the acquiescence of Newfoundland, also, would be eventually secured.

Having completed his visitation of the Districts, it remained for the Deputation to hold, in pursuance of his instructions, a general meeting of Missionaries from all the Districts, for the purpose of making arrangements, subject to the approval of the English Conference, for introducing the new system without further delay. Public business requiring his attendance in Canada for a few weeks, this general meeting was postponed until the middle of July. On the day appointed, he met, at Halifax, the brethren who had been deputed to attend by the several District-Meetings; and, assisted by the Rev. Enoch Wood, the President of the Canadian Conference, and the Rev. John Ryerson, the Co-Delegate, who had kindly accompanied him on his return from Canada, he entered upon the business for which the meeting had been convened. The plan which the English Conference had applied to France and Australasia having received the hearty concurrence of all the Missionaries at their respective District-Meetings, which Dr. Beecham had attended, the business of this general meeting was mainly to consider the recommendations embodied in the plan as to the measures requisite for the support and extension of the work. All these matters had the fullest consideration; and resolutions were adopted for providing an efficient Contingent Fund, to be raised in the same way as in England; for applying the principle of the Children's Fund, the operation of which will be that sixty-eight members will have to provide for the allowance of one child, this year; for raising a Fund for the Education of the Children of Ministers; and for preparing a plan for the formation of a Worn-Out Ministers' Fund. A Chapel Relief Fund was found to be unnecessary, for the satisfactory reason that they had proceeded upon the plan of building places of worship so far free from debt that there were not any cases of embarrassed Trusts to be met. It appeared, too, on inquiry, that the mode of settlement was generally satisfactory, and that provision had been made, in provincial Acts of Parliament, for securing the chapels to their intended use. The importance of diffusing Wesleyan and religious literature through the new Connexion was strongly felt; and measures were taken for the establishment of an efficient Book-Room, and the wider diffusion of a weekly religious journal which had been established some time in one of the Districts. The educational prospects of the new Connexion appeared very encouraging. Gratifying reports were presented, showing the beneficial operation of the Institution at Mount Allison, Sackville, which Dr. Beecham had himself previously visited. In the two noble buildings of this Institution young people of both sexes receive a sound, general education, with which is combined a thorough Christian and Wesleyan training; and many of the students have experienced the saving power of the Gospel. The Institution stands

very high in public estimation, and several persons of other religious bodies send their children thither for education. It has ever been the wish of the Trustees, as well as of Mr. Allison, the generous founder,—who has contributed towards its erection and commencement perhaps not less than £7,000,—that this Institution, in its two departments, should be made to subserve the interests of the Society; and it was one of the most pleasing acts of the late general meeting, or Provisional Conference, at Halifax, to recognise, at the desire of the Trustees, this educational establishment as a Connexional Institution, and appoint the officers and board of management for the ensuing year. In respect of the state and prospects of the work generally, there is much that is satisfactory. The spirit of simple, zealous piety, with a decided English feeling, is manifested by our people. The labours of the Missionaries are attended with success; as appears from the fact that the Reports from the several Districts, laid before the Provisional Conference, showed a net increase of upwards of nine hundred members, besides nearly six hundred on trial. Great openings for increased usefulness, moreover, present themselves, in extensive districts which invite Missionary enterprise.

Having completed the main business of this general meeting at Halifax, Dr. Beecham sent home his Report to be presented to the Conference, which was preparing to assemble at Leeds, himself remaining a short time longer to complete certain arrangements that were in progress. The Conference, cordially approving of his proceedings, constituted the Missions in Nova-Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Cape-Breton, New-Brunswick, Newfoundland, and Bermuda,—which had been previously under the direction of the Wesleyan Conference and Missionary Committee,—a distinct but affiliated Connexion, under the title of "The Wesleyan-Methodist Connexion or Church of Eastern British America." At the same time, it recognised the general meeting of Missionaries, which had been held at Halifax, as the First Conference of this new Connexion; and Dr. Beecham as its First President, appointing him to perform the functions of that office during the ensuing year. A fortnight after transmitting his Report, Dr. Beecham embarked for England, and had the satisfaction of reaching home in time to give to the Conference at Leeds, at one of its closing sittings, a fuller account of his visit, and to receive the warm congratulations of his brethren.

Two other important arrangements require a brief notice. Dr. Beecham had received an earnest invitation from Newfoundland to visit that old and interesting Mission of the Society, and make himself acquainted, by personal observation, with its actual state and wants. With this invitation he would have gladly complied; but any thing like an effective visitation would have detained him at least six weeks longer from home; and it appeared more desirable, on he whole, that

one or more of those on whom the administration of the new system must principally devolve should go in his place, for the purpose of acquiring that knowledge of the state of Newfoundland which might be of practical use in making arrangements for the working of that Mission for the future, and also of opening up kindly intercourse with the brethren and friends in that remote District, thus making them feel that they have an interest in the affectionate sympathy of their new ecclesiastical connexions. It was therefore arranged that the Rev. Dr. Richey, whom the Conference has appointed Co-Delegate for the year, and the Rev. Richard Knight, Chairman of the New-Brunswick District, who thirty-nine years since commenced his Missionary career in Newfoundland, should at once visit the principal places in that District; and the morning of August 3d presented a scene of unusual Methodist and Missionary interest to the friends of the Society at Halifax, connected with the departure of three Royal Mail steamers for their respective destinations. First the steamer, with Dr. Beecham on board, on his return to England, left the pier. Half-an-hour afterwards the Newfoundland steamer followed, with Dr. Richey, Mr. Knight, and the Chairman of the Newfoundland District and two other Missionaries from thence, who had been at the Provisional Conference at Halifax. And then the Bermuda steamer, with the Rev. Isaac Whitehouse, returning also from the Conference, took her departure. We are happy to announce that intelligence has just been received at the Mission-House, that Dr. Richey and Mr. Knight have returned to Halifax, having most satisfactorily accomplished the object of their visitation. We hope to furnish some particulars respecting it at an early opportunity.

The other arrangement to which we have referred is designed to promote the Missionary spirit in the newly-formed Connexion. The Missionary Societies in the several Districts will continue to sustain an Auxiliary relation to the Parent Society, and remit their receipts to the General Fund; and Dr. Beecham, deeming it desirable to give a new impulse to the Missionary feeling, with a view to obtain enlarged contributions to the Fund, and otherwise advance the Mission-cause, made an arrangement for the Canadian Indian Missionary, the Rev. Peter Jones, to visit, in company with Dr. Richey, the principal places in Nova-Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and New-Brunswick. A converted Indian, pleading the cause of Christian Missions, has never yet been seen in these provinces; and it is hoped that the visit of Mr. Jones, while exciting general interest, may exert a beneficial influence upon the remaining aboriginal inhabitants. A remnant only of the Melicete tribe is found in New-Brunswick; but in Nova-Scotia there is yet a considerable number of the Micmac Indians, for whose religious benefit a local Missionary association at Halifax, in which Christians of the several denominations unite, is now making praiseworthy exer-

tions. Arrangements were made for meeting the expenses of Mr. Jones, by local exertions; and his Missionary tour, in company with Dr. Richey, was to be undertaken during the fine weather with which the American provinces are usually favoured in the autumnal season. We shall wait with interest the report of this visitation.

"What hath God wrought?" In the year 1775, William Black, then a youth about fifteen years of age, removed with his father's family, from Huddersfield, in Yorkshire, to Amherst, in Nova-Scotia, where his father had purchased an estate. About four years afterwards, as appears from his own letter to Mr. Wesley, (which letter Mr. Wesley published in his Journal, under date of April 15th, 1782,) William, and his parents, and other members of the family, experienced the saving power of the Gospel. "A few of the old Methodists who emigrated from England some years before," another account states, "having had something of a revival in their souls, began to hold little meetings for prayer and exhortation;" and these meetings became the means of the conversion of William and his father's family. Full of zeal, William immediately, like the Psalmist, began to declare to others "what God had done for his soul;" and he shortly afterwards entered upon that course of evangelistic labours by which the cause of Christ was remarkably extended through the provinces of Eastern British America. Nor were those labours confined to the continent. His biographer, the Rev. Dr. Richey, states, that, in the year 1791, "in pursuance, it would seem, of an arrangement suggested by Dr. Coke, he sailed from Halifax to Newfoundland. The remarkable outpouring of the Holy Spirit which attended his labours, transient though they were, in that island, formed a new era in the history of his ministerial usefulness." The result of this visit, continues his biographer, "was a large accession to the Methodist Society, and the dawn of that brighter day which has since shone upon our Mission in that island." "No less than two hundred souls were converted to God during his brief sojourn in Conception-Bay. Nor are the fruits of that visit to be estimated by its immediate results. He organized Methodism, settled the Mission-property, and secured it to the Connexion, increased and inspirited the Society, and obtained for them the help they needed." Mr. Black finished his career at Halifax in the year 1834; and his biographer, five years afterwards, referring to the extraordinary success which the Great Head of the church had vouchsafed to his servant, remarks, "Besides the incalculably beneficial effect of his zealous labours and holy example in edifying the people of God, not less, probably, than *five hundred* instances might even now be traced in which truth from his lips was clothed with salvation to those who heard it." Mr. Black lived to witness the result of his zealous endeavours, in the formation of extensive Missions in Eastern British America, of which he was regarded as the father, and over

which he presided as General Superintendent. The fuller developement of the work which was originated by the instrumentality of the humble labours of the converted emigrant youth is now to be contemplated in the recently-formed "Wesleyan-Methodist Connexion or Church of Eastern British America," with its eighty Ministers, besides Supernumeraries, its seventy Circuits, upwards of thirteen thousand church-members, and nearly six hundred on trial.

But while the review furnishes cause for gratitude and encouragement, it is necessary to guard against extravagant expectations. This new Connexion commences under auspicious circumstances; but much remains to be done to insure complete success. A new system cannot be introduced without steady, continuous effort. It will be a work of considerable time to diffuse correct and enlarged views among the people generally, and call forth their energies in the support of the Connexional Funds and Institutions on which the maintenance and extension of the work must ultimately depend. The caution against misunderstanding on this subject which Dr. Bunting judiciously gave at the last Anniversary of the Society, at Exeter-Hall, ought not to be forgotten. The principal relief which this Society can expect from the new affiliated Conferences, he justly observed, is *prospective*, and there will be at present quite as much necessity for continuous and actual effort of this Society to aid the British American work as ever. This is a correct view of the case. The new affiliated Connexions must be helped, until their own local resources are sufficiently developed, and they can effectually help themselves. In due time, through God's blessing attending the efforts of his servants, the Wesleyan-Methodist Connexion or Church in Eastern America will, we doubt not, be able to sustain itself, and will then combine its efforts, with those of the Parent Society, in the extension of the Gospel in Heathen lands.

The settlement of some important matters connected with the work in Canada, was another object contemplated by Dr. Beecham's visit. One of these was the final adjustment of the Society's claims, on account of Missionary service in Canada, which were transferred some years since to the Clergy Reserve Fund of that province. In the year 1832, the Missionary Committee, at the request of the Imperial Government, considerably extended their operations in Western Canada; in support of which it was engaged that they should receive an annual allowance of Seven Hundred Pounds. This was paid out of the Casual and Territorial Revenue of the province; but when a change took place in the administration of that revenue, the Society's claim for Seven Hundred Pounds per annum was transferred to the Clergy Reserve Fund, by which unsatisfactory arrangement the Society became involuntarily mixed up with the agitation respecting that Fund which

has disturbed the peace of the province for a succession of years. The feeling in favour of secularizing that Fund at length became predominant; and an Act passed the Provincial Legislature, at its last session, for applying the Fund to Municipal purposes, reserving only such an amount as would be necessary to meet the payments to individual Ministers and to religious bodies, to which the faith of the Crown was pledged. By this Act the Society's claim was secured for twenty years; when the payment was to cease. But the Act also provided that the Governor in Council should be empowered to make a commutation of any or all of the claims on the part of Ministers or religious bodies, according to a fixed scale, providing it were done in the space of one year from the passing of the Act. This reservation in favour of religious purposes was very unpalatable to those who were anxious that the entire Fund should be applied to secular objects; and a new agitation was immediately commenced, with the view of overawing the Local Government, so as to deter it from carrying into effect the Commutation-clause, and thus leave the annual payments to religious bodies and Ministers open to renewed agitation every succeeding year. The Committee, having suffered so much annoyance on this subject, and, anxious to escape from further threatened agitation, were very desirous to avail themselves of the benefit of the Commutation-clause, should that be found practicable; and had not any other business called their Secretary across the Atlantic, they considered that this negotiation was of sufficient importance to justify their sending him on that errand alone. He was accordingly furnished with all the necessary credentials and powers to enable him to manage the business on the Committee's behalf. It would be too tedious to enter into the details of his negotiation with the Provincial Government, nor could he sufficiently describe the amount of anxious solicitude and care which it cost him. He had almost reached the conclusion that he should have to return without having obtained his object; but, at almost the last hour, he had brought the negotiation to a satisfactory close, and obtained an equitable commutation of the yearly allowance of Seven Hundred Pounds. The agitation of the Clergy Reserve Fund question is thus happily set at rest, so far, however, as the Society is concerned; and the yearly interest of the sum received in commutation of the original claim will, for the time to come, contribute to the support of those Missionary operations in Canada, which, with the view of providing more adequately the means of religious instruction, had been so greatly extended in compliance with the desire of the Imperial Government.

It has been stated that the union of the Society's Missions in Lower, or Eastern, Canada, and the Territories of the Hudson's-Bay Company, with the Canadian Conference, had been arranged by correspondence during the course of last year. A strong

desire was expressed, at the time, by our Missionary brethren and friends in Lower Canada, that a Deputation should be sent from England to effect that union, which desire, for the reasons already assigned, could not be met; but they received the assurance that, should a Deputation be appointed, the following year, to Eastern British America, he should also visit Canada, and attend to any matters which might be left for further consideration and final adjustment. In pursuance of this promise, Dr. Beecham attended the Canadian Conference, which was held at London, in Western Canada, during the month of June. There he met many of the brethren from Lower Canada, who, up to the Conference of 1854, had been Missionaries, under the immediate direction of the Missionary Committee, but had now, in consequence of the Union, become members of the Canadian Conference; and certain claims, as a compensation for their being admitted to all the privileges of its members, with other matters, were fully considered and satisfactorily adjusted.

The completion of this Union forms an important epoch in the history of Methodist Missions in Canada. The commencement of Methodism in that extensive country is co-eval with the introduction of British power. Several of the soldiers in General Wolfe's army were Methodists; and, on their being disbanded, they settled at Quebec, having for their first Class-Leader a pious Sergeant of the name of Watson. The meetings for religious services, then commenced, after several vicissitudes were discontinued, for a time, about the beginning of the present century; but they were shortly resumed on the visit of a Missionary from the United States. Within a few years after the United States became independent, Methodist Missionaries from thence had commenced their labours in Upper Canada; and the work was subsequently extended to the Lower Province. The war between the United States and England in 1812 disturbed these peaceful operations. The services of Missionaries under the direction of the English Conference became especially desirable; and, some time after the re-establishment of peace, the work in Lower Canada was chiefly consigned to the latter, the American Methodist Conference reserving to itself the management of its work in the Upper Province; but, in 1828, on the ground of certain public considerations, the force of which had long been felt, the plan of forming the American Societies in Upper Canada into a separate and independent Church, with a Conference of its own, was formally adopted by the General Conference of the American Methodist Episcopal Church. This arrangement, however, did not affect the English work in the Province. Still the English Missionaries prosecuted their own distinct course of evangelistic enterprise, and were considerably increased in number, in consequence of the arrangements of the Committee with the Imperial Government in the year 1832; when, it appearing desir-

able, on Christian grounds, that the two Missionary bodies, belonging as they did to the same family, should combine their efforts for the good of the common cause, an Union between the Canadian Conference and the Society's Missions in Upper Canada was arranged, and finally cemented in the year 1847. By the recent transfer of the Society's Missions in Lower, or Eastern, Canada, and the Hudson's-Bay Territories, to the Canadian Conference, the full and complete union of the two bodies was effected; and now that the Methodism of Canada had become one, and all its energies and resources were placed under the direction of one common head, Dr. Beecham was anxious to ascertain the probable result of this concentration of its strength. He had been officially connected with all the negotiations and proceedings which had taken place from the period of the Committee's arrangements with the Imperial Government, and the first Union of the Society's Missions in Upper Canada with the Canadian Conference, to the present time; and he was solicitous to be able, from personal observation, and inquiry upon the spot, to report to the Missionary Committee and the Conference, on his return, what were the facilities and capabilities of the Canadian Conference for the successful prosecution of evangelistic enterprise in the rapidly increasing districts of Canada, and among the aboriginal inhabitants of that Province and the Territory of Hudson's-Bay.

The Conference itself, of course, first claimed his attention; and, after close observation, for several days, of the temper and proceedings of the brethren assembled, under the able Presidency of the Rev. Enoch Wood, supported by the Co-Delegate, the Rev. John Ryerson, the previous impression which he had received in their favour was confirmed. They are an able and devoted body of Christian Ministers; evidently imbued with a considerable measure of that Missionary spirit which prepares them for usefulness in a rising country, and disposes them to encounter, without shrinking, the hardships and privations incident to new Stations in the more remote settlements, and among the aboriginal tribes. Some important arrangements were made at the Conference for calling forth more fully the energies of the people in support of the work, by placing the Connexional Funds, as in England, under the management of mixed Committees of Ministers and Laymen. One of these measures evinced the kind solicitude of the people to promote the temporal comfort of their Ministers. This measure originated in the recommendation of a number of Layfriends that the salaries of their Ministers should receive such an increase as would be more suitable for the position they sustain; and, having met with general approval, it was accordingly adopted by the last Conference.

The position which Methodism occupies in Canada evinces the adaptation of the system to the wants and circumstances of a new

country. Its influence is great; and, as its undivided energies will henceforth be put forth on one common plan, under one direction, it may be calculated that, with God's blessing, its one great end—the spread of vital Christianity—will be more rapidly accelerated. Dr. Beecham was enabled to form some opinion, from personal observation, of the state and prospects of the work, having seen several of the principal cities and towns of Canada. Among these, he may specify London, where the Conference was held, Hamilton, Toronto, Cobourg, Brockville, where the next Conference is to meet, Kingston, Montreal, and Quebec. The Methodist chapels, or churches as they are termed, in these places are generally large and handsome buildings, several of which would compare advantageously with the best Wesleyan chapels in England. He preached in some of those churches; and saw the congregations which worship there, which for their size and apparent respectability were equal to any he had ever seen. The congregations, the services, and the spirit of the people all forcibly reminded him of home. Religion throughout the Wesleyan Body in Canada is in a healthy, advancing state; and it was especially gratifying to him to observe, that the spirit of piety which prevails is the spirit of old English Methodism, and that there is a growing desire among both Ministers and people to promote its influence.

In attempting to estimate the capabilities of a church for increasing usefulness, its arrangements for providing a healthy and religious literature for its members, and the means of imparting an useful and religious education to the young, must not be overlooked. In both these respects the Methodist Church of Canada promises well. It has a Book-Establishment at Toronto, which the Deputation visited; and, although it will not compare, in respect of the extent of its premises, or the scale of its operations, with the Methodist Book-Room in New-York, which he afterwards saw, it is a very creditable establishment for a young church in a new country. From this depot, religious and other useful books are disseminated through the Province, the yearly issue of which exhibits encouraging increase; and here are published a Missionary periodical, resembling the "Missionary Notices" published by the Parent Committee in England, and a respectable weekly journal, with an extensive sale, a kind of publication for the diffusion of religious and general information, especially adapted to the wants of a scattered population, and extensively prevalent throughout the neighbouring States. Then, for the higher branches of education, the Methodist Canadian Church has its Victoria College, at Cobourg; a visit to which also afforded much gratification. It is an imposing building, furnishing accommodation for a considerable number of students. During the last session about two hundred were in attendance; exclusive of those in the Medical School, numbering fifty more. In this establishment the students receive an education which fits

them for any station in society, or any professional pursuit. Under its present able management it has acquired such a high reputation in the Province, that persons of different religious persuasions send their sons thither in preference to other academies. The rising influence of this Institution may be partly estimated from the fact, that several of its first students are now members of the Provincial Parliament; while the care which is bestowed upon the religious training of the students is apparent from the circumstance that many are brought to a saving acquaintance with the truth. During the last year, a considerable religious awakening took place in the College, and many of the youths were converted, and became members of Society. From the position which this literary institution has attained in public opinion, there is reason to believe, that the present number of students might perhaps be doubled; and the corresponding enlargement of the College-buildings has therefore become an important *desideratum*. It is also in contemplation to attempt the formation of a theological institution for the training of candidates for the ministry, who, while pursuing their theological studies, shall have the literary advantages of the College.

The Indian Mission department of the Canadian work requires special notice. In the year 1836, Dr. Beecham had been called before a large and influential Committee of the House of Commons, of which that truly Christian philanthropist, the late Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, was the Chairman; and had there to combat the theory that a previous civilizing process was necessary to prepare a barbarous people for the reception of the Gospel. In opposition thereto, he had maintained that, so far from this being the case, the Gospel itself was the only efficient means of civilization; and that its introduction, in the first instance, was necessary to raise a barbarous Heathen people to civilized life. In support of this view, he had referred to the operations of the Methodist Missionaries among the aboriginal inhabitants of America, and had illustrated the principle that civilized life presents no attractions to the barbarian until he has been enlightened by the Gospel, by exhibiting the cases of Indian tribes in Canada, who had resisted all the benevolent endeavours which had been made to civilize them while in their Heathen state; but when they had received the Gospel from the hands of Methodist Missionaries, a desire was created within them for the comforts of civilized society, and they were then easily induced to engage in those pursuits which would improve their temporal condition, after they had been awakened to a true sense of the importance of their spiritual and eternal interests. He was therefore naturally desirous to embrace the opportunity, which was afforded him by his visit to Canada, of witnessing, with his own eyes, some of those instances of Missionary success among the Indians, which had furnished him with such happy illustrations of his argument.

The first Station which he saw was the Mount Elgin and Muncey

Mission, on the western bank of the river Thames, upwards of twenty miles beyond London. At this place, the Indians are of the Ojibway and Muncey tribes. Mount Elgin has an industrial institution. It is a large stone building, in which about fifty Indian youths and girls receive a religious training, and instruction in useful knowledge. During the former part of every week-day, they have common instruction in the school, and in the later part of the day the boys are employed in various occupations in the farm, and the girls are taught the several arts of household management. The students of both sexes display intelligence and activity. Their progress in useful knowledge is very commendable. A number of the elder girls are becoming qualified to manage domestic affairs, and some of the more advanced youths are capable of undertaking the cultivation of the soil. It is delightful to be present at family worship at this institution, to witness the evidence which the students afford of the religious influence upon their minds, and to hear these native youths and girls, the latter of whom possess voices of uncommon and peculiar sweetness, sing the praises of Almighty God. The moral effect of this establishment on the surrounding Pagan population is a very encouraging circumstance. An Indian girl, apparently about fifteen years of age, was present at evening worship, when the Deputation was there; who, a very few days before, had left her Heathen parents in the forest, and sought an asylum in the institution, and who, when they came to seek her, hid herself on the premises from their research. And it is a case of not unfrequent occurrence for Indian children thus to seek the advantages of the institution; who are generally allowed by their parents to remain there, after they have been reasoned with by the excellent Minister who has charge of the establishment. While here, the Deputation had a meeting with the Chiefs and other principal Indians connected with the Mission, who assembled to present unto him their congratulations; and among these was good John Sunday, whose appearance now strikingly exhibits the marks of advancing age, and whose tears fell plentifully while he gave utterance to his feelings of gratitude for the kindness which he had met with from Christian friends in England. On this visit, the Deputation was accompanied by another Indian Missionary, also well known in England, Mr. Peter Jones; who is still zealously devoting himself to the Missionary work among his countrymen.

Leaving Mount Elgin, he and his companions forded the river Thames, and visited the Oneida Settlement and Mission on the opposite bank. The Oneidas formerly resided in the United States, in a tract of country which he had seen when travelling westward through the state of New-York. When the American Government resolved on removing the Indians into the far west, the Oneidas preferred to place themselves under the British Crown. The Chief, Abraham

Schuyler, and his son-in-law, the Methodist Missionary, Abraham Sickles, himself an Oneida, were sent as a deputation from the tribe to Canada, to seek a new residence; and they finally fixed upon the spot immediately opposite to Mount Elgin. Having purchased five thousand acres of good land, they returned and fetched the tribe to their new home. It is an interesting place. They have built themselves a commodious church, with a neat tower and spire. They have erected a school for their children, and a Teacher's house; and they have built good houses for themselves, furnished in a very comfortable style, and applied themselves diligently to the cultivation of the soil. The Deputation drove a considerable distance through the settlement, to witness their cultivated lands, and respectable farm-houses, and cottages, with suitable out-buildings; and then returned to the house of the Missionary Sickles, where the venerable Chief Schuyler and other subordinate Chiefs were assembled to give him and his party a Christian and cordial welcome. An address was delivered by the Chief, who is the spokesman or orator of the tribe, to which the Deputation replied, the Missionary interpreting; and the meeting concluded with prayer.

The next visit was paid to the Alnwick Mission, about twenty miles north of Cobourg, on Lake Ontario, and about two miles from Rice-Lake, on the south. Here, also, there is an industrial institution, comprising two large stone buildings, for the education of Indian youths and girls on a plan similar to that of Mount Elgin. Good stables, a barn, and other out-buildings are connected with the institution. The Indians at this Mission are Ojibways, and are of the number who have enjoyed, for the longest period, the advantages of Missionary teaching. They formerly resided at Grape-Island, Bay of Quinte, from whence they were conducted to their present residence, about eighteen years since, by their Missionary, the Rev. William Case; he having obtained an allotment of land for their use from Sir John Colbron, then Lieutenant-Governor of the province. Near the institution, a good church, with a tower and spire, has been built; and a neat, regularly-built Christian Indian village, comprising about forty houses, has sprung up, at one end of which the venerable Missionary Case has fixed his residence.* On this occasion, the Deputation had a

* As the December Number of the "Missionary Notices," containing this part of the Report, was passing through the press, the affecting intelligence was received of the death of this excellent man. He had attended the Conference at London, where he preached an interesting sermon commemorative of the close of the fiftieth year of his ministry; and he returned home from the Conference in his usual health. He appeared to be in the enjoyment of a vigorous old age; and, when Dr. Beecham and his friend Dr. Richey visited Alnwick, he evinced his wonted disregard of exposure and hardship, by accompanying them—in opposition to their wishes that he would not thus endanger his health—on their journey back to Cobourg, in his open carriage, in the midst of drenching rain and wind. Dr. Beecham would not have undertaken the journey himself that day, had he not been

public reception in the church, which the Indians had adorned in a tasteful manner with the graceful branches of the sugar-maple tree. Although the weather proved very unfavourable at the time, the church was crowded; and the appearance of the people in their neat apparel, and their decorous conduct, indicated the advances they had made from barbarous life. The dress and behaviour of some of the younger married women were especially becoming. An address was delivered by one of the principal Indians, which was interpreted by another. To this the Deputation replied; but it was not necessary that it should be rendered into the native language, as they had so far become acquainted with English, that they could understand the reply without the aid of an interpreter. The substance of the address was the same in this case as in the others. At all the Stations the Deputation was welcomed by the Indians as the Missionary representative; and he was requested to convey to their Missionary fathers and friends in England their grateful acknowledgments for sending them the Gospel to teach them the way of salvation, and raise them to the enjoyments of civilized life.

The result of these visits to the Indian Stations was most satisfactory. In the cases of the many Christian Indians of various tribes with whom he was brought into intercourse, the Deputation had irresistible evidence that the Gospel becomes the power of God unto salvation when directly applied to the dark mind and heart of the barbarian, on whom no previous civilizing process has exerted any kind of mollifying influence; and he found also abundant proof of the correctness of the principle he had maintained before the British Parliamentary Committee, that the Gospel humanizes those who yield to its saving power, and invariably draws after it in its train the blessings of civilized life. Although the advancement in civilization was not everywhere the same in degree, as the same means had not been everywhere applied for the same length of time or in equally favourable circumstances; yet the improved appearance of the Indians at Mount Elgin, the neat houses, the farms and cultivated lands of the Oneidas, and the pretty Indian village of Alnwick, embosomed in the primeval forest, which would advantageously compare with many villages in Christian England, furnished the clearest evidence that the Gospel, in the hands of faithful Missionaries, is capable of raising aboriginal people from the degradation and wretchedness of barbarous

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under engagement to proceed at night on his voyage down the Lake to Kingston. In this, however, he was disappointed; for the stormy weather would not allow the packet to approach the pier, and he was therefore compelled to remain at Cobourg until the following evening. A few weeks after this, Mr. Case had a fall from his horse, the effects of which terminated his valuable life. He had entered the seventy-sixth year of his age. A well-written memoir of this laborious and successful herald of the cross will prove a valuable addition to modern Missionary biography.

life to the condition of a Christian and civilized community; and the review of the whole, according to his judgment, affords ample encouragement to the vigorous prosecution of Missionary enterprise among the Heathen, by assuring those who engage therein that they do not toil in vain, nor spend their strength for nought.

A wide field for extended Missionary labour presents itself in Canada. An occurrence of uncommon interest, illustrative of this, took place at the Canadian Conference. An old Chief, now known by the name of Augustine, but whose Indian name is *Shing-wank-koons*, signifying "Little Pine-Tree," arrived on a visit from the northern shores of Lake Huron, and addressed the Conference at great length. The history of this Chief was afterwards given by Mr. Case. He had been, in his Pagan state, a confirmed drunkard. A Missionary of some other church visited the place; but the Chief would not hear him. At length, he was informed that a Methodist Missionary had arrived. He eagerly asked if it was certain that he was a *Methodist* Missionary; and, on receiving the assurance that this was really the case, he said that he would then give up drinking, and attend to what the Missionary said. He redeemed his pledge. From that hour, he abandoned the intoxicating draught, and became a diligent hearer of the word; he was shortly made the subject of its saving power; and he has ever since adorned his Christian profession by a consistent life, and by endeavours to spread among the people the knowledge of salvation. The appearance of the Chief was dignified and imposing. He addressed the Conference with great effect in a strain of natural and touching eloquence. He said, when the white man first came, he was helpless and destitute like a child; but that the Indian kindly welcomed and nurtured him. Now the scene was sadly changed: the Indian had become the dependent child, while the white man claimed and occupied the soil. The ground, he said, on which the city of London stands, the very spot on which the Conference was then assembled, was once all the property of his grandfathers; and he concluded with an earnest and pathetic appeal for Missionaries to teach his people the way of salvation. The deep conviction produced by this affecting appeal was, that the least compensation which the white man can make for the wrongs inflicted on these aboriginal owners of the soil is, to exert himself in procuring for them the blessings of Christianity. The facilities which the Methodist Canadian Church possesses for a successful prosecution of Missionary enterprise among the Indians, as well as the other departments of the work in Canada, if corresponding pecuniary means can be found, are manifestly great; and it is equally clear that, from the agencies at its command, and its closer contiguity to the scene of action, the interests of the Missions in the Hudson's Bay Territories will be greatly promoted by their being placed under the management of the Canadian Conference.

There is another department of the work which, from the peculiar interest that invests it at the present juncture, is deserving of especial notice. Extensive access has been had to the military; and very beneficial effects have been the result. It was a serious question whether the late Canadian Conference ought not to send a Minister after the Methodist soldiers who had gone to the Crimea; but this was rendered impracticable by the greater demand which was made for ministerial supply than the Conference could possibly meet. That the number of Methodist soldiers who have been sent to the Crimea from British America is so considerable as to render such an arrangement very fitting and proper, is, however, a great fact. After careful inquiry in Canada, at Halifax, and elsewhere, it may be confidently stated that, in the regiments sent to the seat of war in the East, there were "hundreds" of soldiers who were formerly under the ministerial and pastoral care of the Methodist Missionaries in the several provinces of British America. And it will be a cause of thankfulness to the friends of the Society to learn that, by the instrumentality of those Missionary operations which they have contributed to support, so large a number of our brave soldiers have been thus religiously prepared to encounter danger, and brave death itself, in fighting the battles of their country against the common foe.

In the journeys which he undertook in the prosecution of his work, Dr. Beecham passed through several parts of the United States, and saw some of their principal cities; but, as his official appointment was to British America, his proceedings there are made exclusively the subject of the present report.

THE END.

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